



Winesburg, Ohio Grotesque Short Story

Workshopping Guide



Opening

- Does the writer establish the grotesque character immediately?
- Physical grotesque features?
- Grotesque clothing?
- Grotesque domicile?

Backstory

- Does the writer establish a background story for the character that sets the tone for the grotesque character's loneliness, isolation, or sense of loss?
- Is the backstory too long? The majority of the story should be the adventure.
- Is it too short? Do you need more? Are you fully convinced of this character's reason for being isolated?

The Adventure

-This is the heart of the story. It's the fun part where the character does some kind of strange action, like getting naked and running out into the street.

-Does the writer establish a reason for this Adventure? What sparks this sudden decision to act?

-Are they seeking out youth in any way?

-Are the actions strange enough, but not so strange that they're just ridiculous. Your gut will tell you the answer to this question.

The Truth

- Is the truth the grotesque tries to convey a really good nugget of advice?
- Think bumper sticker wisdom. You know, at it's heart it's a great piece of advice to live by.
- Is this great truth presented in a way that makes it seem not so great? Think "Hands" and "Tandy."

End of the Adventure

- At the end of the Adventure is there a failure of communication?
- Is the character driven deeper into isolation from this experience?
- Does the Adventure feel like it is completed based on your reading of *Winesburg, Ohio*?

Motifs

- Is this story jam packed with motifs?
- Is it clear that the writer understands the purpose of the motifs by the way they are used in the story?
- Where could the writer add more motifs in the story?

Grammar

- Did the writer take the time to write sentences that follow the rules of grammar and are clear?
- If not, God help us all!
- Are there any clunky, wonky sentences that need to be rewritten?
- Any 'awk' sentences?